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3 October 1948

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2001 2008

BERNHARDT, Johannes E. F.

Subject either owns or is in some way connected with the following companies:

1. Sagitario Filas, S.A. This is a film production company which was founded about a year ago. The entire capital is BERNHARDT's. The company has produced or is in the process of producing the following films:
  - a. "Cuatro Mujeres". Released in Spain, and has just been sold to England.
  - b. "El Huesped de las Tinieblas". Story of the Spanish philosopher Bequer. Released in Spain.
  - c. "La Fiesta Sigus". Finished, but not yet released. The film was shot in Salamanca. Story concerns bullfighting.
  - d. "El Senor Esteben". Film now in production.
  - e. ? ? Film now in production.
  - f. ? ? Film now in production.

BERNHARDT is trying to sell number b. to South America and to the United States.

Sagitario Filas has recently opened a distribution department, located on Calle Zurbano. They have at the moment nine films to distribute - three of their own and six foreign films.

2. Cine Arte. Entire capital is BERNHARDT's. This is a film laboratory where they make educational films, synchronize films, etcetera. There is a large staff.

3. Erce, S. A., Gran Via 31, Madrid. This is an import-export company. The entire capital is BERNHARDT's. Among other employees is the German national HELMUNG, who was employed in the German Embassy in Madrid during the war. Another employee is RAHLKE (probably Rudolf), a former Sofindus employee. One Doctor FRANZ or GANTZ, a Dutchman, also works in Erce.

4. A motor factory in Madrid which works together with the Army. This factory has a big work shop with very modern installations. BERNHARDT owns the entire factory. The factory has been operating since the end of the second

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EXEMPTIONS Section 3(b)  
(2)(A) Privacy ☐  
(2)(B) Methods/Sources ☒  
(2)(G) Foreign Relations ☐

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World War. Source believes the factory has some relation to a Diesel engine factory which is being put up in Valencia. BERNHARDT is said to be contributing capital to this Diesel factory, but will not own it exclusively. BERNER (?), the man who handled secret accounts in Sofindus during the war, worked for the motor factory in Madrid for some time, but was later dropped by BERNHARDT - reason unknown.

5. A new office at Jose Antonio 42 or 46. BERNHARDT opened this office about the middle of September. Source does not know what the purpose of this company is, but said it was possibly a money lending business. Last year (1947) BERNHARDT was operating a money lending business on the Calle Zurbano, where he loaned money at a very high rate of interest.

6. A soap factory at Maliano in the Province of Santander. BERNHARDT provided all the capital. Doctor YOST, a former teacher of the Colegio Aleman in Madrid, is manager and persona de confianza in this undertaking.

7. BERNHARDT is believed to have recently purchased a big finca somewhere near Madrid. Source does not know at all if this is true. BERNHARDT is known to have a finca in Denia, near Valencia, which includes a large orange grove, and owns still another finca, location unknown.

8. Secret funds left in BERNHARDT's custody. Source states that Hens Thomson, Nazi Party Chief in Spain, who was repatriated at the end of the war, turned over to BERNHARDT some 1,700,000 pesetas. At the same time about 2,000,000 pesetas of SS funds were put in subject's custody.

From the end of the war until recently subject made monthly payments to some (not many) widows of German soldiers in Spain. He recently stopped these payments to the widows, although source believes he could not have used up more than 5% of these funds. When there was some adverse comment about subject's failure to continue the payments, he resumed some of the payments and source believes he is making the payments at the present time.

Source stated that the above sums are really "small potatoes"; that the German underground in Spain has hundreds of millions of pesetas which is not being used at the moment, some of it in the form of jewels.

9. Source states subject tries to give people the impression that he needs money. He is now negotiating for a loan from the government branch (el sindicato) which supervises the Spanish film industry. He is asking for a loan of three million pesetas. Source believes subject is doing this in an attempt to cover up his true financial status. He has sent large amounts of money to Argentina. According to subject's friends, he has two or three business enterprises in the Argentine. Recently he complained that one of his enterprises in the Argentine was costing him money instead of making money.

Subject's secretary, Mrs. Scheaffer, has made two trips to Switzerland in the last two years. She also made one trip to Portugal and another to Argentina. Source believes she assisted in moving some of BERNHARDT's money from Switzerland to Argentina. Mrs. Scheaffer travels with a Spanish passport.

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She was a German up to the end of the war, when she suddenly became a Spanish citizen. Her husband was the banner bearer of all Nazi parades, and an official of the Party. He was previously a chauffeur and she previously worked in SEPU, Madrid. The explanation given by BERNHARDT for the trip to Argentina by his secretary was that she was assisting his wife who visited the Argentine for six or eight months in 1947.

Source states that BERNHARDT has a good contact in Argentina in the person of the Spanish Ambassador ARELLA. He states that ARELLA was bribed several times by BERNHARDT during the war, when ARELLA held a high post in the Spanish Foreign Office. One favor he did for BERNHARDT was to convince Spanish frontier authorities that they should "look the other way" when German supply trucks arrived at the Spanish-French border. ARELLA was paid 500,000 pesetas for each of his favors for BERNHARDT.

10. BERNHARDT chose a Spanish manager and director for his film company, Sagitario Films, S.A., since it was not advantageous to operate in his own name. The manager is a former Gobernador Civil of Salamanca. BERNHARDT hired two German employees to work with the Spanish manager in the belief that their nationality and friendship would naturally make them loyal to him (Bernhardt) and they could be depended on to report to him any irregularities in the procedures of his Spanish manager. One of the German employees was Clara ZEPP, former secretary to MOSEIG, BERNHARDT's righthand man in Gestapo affairs, and the other was Adolf MOHR, former Sofindus employee.

BERNHARDT recently dismissed eight employees from Sagitario Films and Cine Arte, and all eight have filed suit against the companies. Among the eight were the two German employees mentioned above. BERNHARDT personally called the two Germans by telephone and attempted to persuade them to call on him to talk the matter over, and offered to pay them indemnization, which he had at first refused. He later sent his secretary, Mrs. Enrique Schaeffer, to persuade them from taking action, but they stood firm. Source states the two were fired when BERNHARDT began to suspect that they were more loyal to the Spanish manager than they were to BERNHARDT. This matter was to be settled at the session of the Special Court for Labor Affairs on 7 October 1948.

The Spanish manager of the film company, who is an old time Falangista, is trying to persuade the Spanish government to take action against BERNHARDT, based on the belief that BERNHARDT has been giving information to the British concerning relations of high Spanish officials with the Nazis during the war. In this regard the Spanish manager has contacted Spanish Minister GIRON and also the secretary to the Minister of Justice, Fernando or Francisco CUESTA. Source states that an official of the Spanish secret police, one LASCANO, who lives on Serrano, is investigating this matter. LASCANO is convinced of BERNHARDT's guilt, but will not take any steps until he has absolute proof.

11. Source stated that BERNHARDT was on very friendly terms with William Milton of the British Embassy. The latter spent several afternoons in BERNHARDT's office having tea and talking for several hours at a time.

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12. Source also made the comment that whenever he meets any of BRENNHARDT's present or former collaborators on the street, their remarks are to the effect that the only solution for the future of Germany is to cooperate with Russia.

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